

worldwide military operations. It may seem possible now because we have been afforded the historically unique privilege of printing the world's reserve currency.

Foreigners so far have been only too willing to take our depreciating dollars for their goods. Economic law eventually will limit our ability to live off others by credit creation; and trust in the dollar will be diminished, if not destroyed. Those who hold these trillion-plus dollars can hold us hostage if it ever becomes in their interest. It may be that economic law and the hostility toward the United States will combine to precipitate an emotionally charged rejection of the dollar.

That is when the true wealth of the country will become self-evident, and we will no longer be able to afford the extravagant expense of pursuing an American empire. No nation has ever been able to finance excessive foreign entanglements and domestic entitlements through printing-press money and borrowing from abroad.

It is time we reconsider the advice of the Founding Fathers and the guidelines of the Constitution, which counsels a foreign policy of nonintervention and strategic independence. Setting a good example is a far better way to spread American ideals than through force of arms. Trading with nations, without interference by international government regulators, is superior to sanctions and tariffs that too often plant the seeds of war.

The principle of self-determination should be permitted for all nations and all demographically defined groups. The world tolerated the breakup of the ruthless Soviet and Yugoslavian systems rather well, even as certain national and ethnic groups demanded self-determination and independence.

This principle is the source of the solution for Iraq.

Instead of the incessant chant about us forcing democracy on others, why not read our history and see how 13 nations joined together to form a loose-knit republic with emphasis on local self-government. Part of the problem with our effort to reorder Iraq is that the best solution is something we have essentially rejected here in the United States. It would make a lot more sense to concentrate on rebuilding our Republic, emphasizing the principles of private property, free markets, trade and personal liberty here at home rather than pursuing war abroad. If this were done, we would not be a militaristic state spending ourselves into bankruptcy, and government benefits to the untold thousands of corporations and special interests would be denied.

True defense is diminished when money and energy are consumed by activities outside the scope of specifically protecting our national interests. Diverting resources away from defense and the protection of our borders, while antagonizing so many around the world, would actually serve to expose

us to greater danger from more determined enemies.

A policy of nonintervention and strategic independence is the course we should take if we are serious about peace and prosperity. Liberty works.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DeFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DeFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the gentleman from Oregon's (Mr. DeFAZIO) time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

THE INCOMPETENCE MUST STOP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, sadly I am here to talk about what we cannot ignore: the sad, sad chronicle of incompetence and blunder which marks this administration's conduct of national security policy.

I do not think in the history of the United States there has been a major national security effort handled so badly. I voted against the war in Iraq. I voted for the war in Afghanistan, and I am glad I did. I voted against the war in Iraq because I did not think it was justified, and I feel vindicated in that judgment; but even for those who thought it was justified, I do not understand how they can fail to join in the criticism of the shambles this administration has made of the policy.

I will insert in the RECORD here, Mr. Speaker, an article by Elisabeth Bumiller from the May 29 New York Times, and the headline is "Conservative Allies Take Chalabi Case to the White House."

[From the New York Times, May 29, 2004]

CONSERVATIVE ALLIES TAKE CHALABI CASE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

(By Elisabeth Bumiller)

WASHINGTON, May 28—Influential outside advisers to the Bush administration who support the Iraqi exile leader Ahmad Chalabi are pressing the White House to stop what one has called a "smear campaign," against Mr. Chalabi, whose Baghdad home and offices were ransacked last week in an American-supported raid.

Last Saturday, several of these Chalabi supporters said, a small delegation of them marched into the West Wing office of Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, to complain about the administration's abrupt change of heart about Mr. Chalabi and to register their concerns about the course of the war in Iraq. The group in-

cluded Richard N. Perle, the former chairman of a Pentagon advisory group, and R. James Woolsey, director of central intelligence under President Bill Clinton.

Members of the group, who had requested the meeting, told Ms. Rice that they were incensed at what they view as the vilification of Mr. Chalabi, a favorite of conservatives who is now central to an F.B.I. investigation into who in the American government might have given him highly classified information that he is suspected of turning over to Iran.

Mr. Chalabi has denied that he provided Iran with any classified information.

The session with Ms. Rice was one sign of the turmoil that Mr. Chalabi's travails have produced within an influential corner of Washington, where Mr. Chalabi is still seen as a potential leader of Iraq.

"There is a smear campaign under way, and it is being perpetrated by the C.I.A. and the D.I.A. and a gaggle of former intelligence officers who have succeeded in planting these stories, which are accepted with hardly any scrutiny," Mr. Perle, a leading conservative, said in an interview.

Mr. Perle, referring to both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, said the campaign against Mr. Chalabi was "an outrageous abuse of power" by United States government officials in Washington and Baghdad.

"I'm talking about Jerry Bremer, for one," Mr. Perle said, referring to L. Paul Bremer III, the top American administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in charge of the occupation of Iraq. "I don't know who gave these orders, but there is no question that the C.P.A. was involved."

In Baghdad, coalition authorities vigorously denied Mr. Perle's assertion. "Jerry Bremer didn't initiate the investigation," Dan Senor, the spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority, said in a telephone interview.

Similarly, Mark Mansfield, a C.I.A. spokesman, called Mr. Perle's accusation that the agency was smearing Mr. Chalabi "absurd." A Defense Department official who asked not to be named said that Mr. Perle's accusations against the D.I.A. had no foundation.

Mr. Chalabi has been a divisive figure for years in Washington, where top Pentagon officials favored him as a future leader of Iraq and top State Department officials distrusted him as unreliable. Either way, Mr. Chalabi and his exile group, the Iraqi National Congress, fed intelligence to the Bush administration about Iraq's unconventional weapons that helped drive the administration toward war.

Intelligence officials now argue that some of the intelligence was fabricated, and that Mr. Chalabi's motives were to push the United States into toppling Saddam Hussein and pave the way for his installation as Iraqi's new leader.

Although Mr. Chalabi's supporters outside the administration have been caustic in their comments about his treatment, there has been relative silence so far from Mr. Chalabi's supporters within the administration. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, who favored going to war in Iraq and was a patron of Mr. Chalabi, did not respond to numerous requests this week for an interview.

Mr. Wolfowitz's spokesman, Charley Cooper, said in an e-mail message that Mr. Wolfowitz believed that Mr. Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress "have provided valuable operational intelligence to our military forces in Iraq, which has helped save American lives." Mr. Cooper added in the message that "Secretary Wolfowitz hopes that the events of the last few weeks haven't undermined that."

The current views of Vice President Dick Cheney and his chief of staff, I. Lewis Libby,